

Message Text

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63

ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

UNCLAS LONDON 11934

DEPARTMENT PASS TO LABOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, UK

SUBJECT: UK STRIKE FIGURES LOWEST FOR TWENTY THREE YEARS

REF: LONDON 9622

1. THE NUMBER OF STRIKES IN THE UK IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1976 WAS THE LOWEST RECORDED FOR THE FIRST-HALF OF ANY YEAR SINCE 1953, ACCORDING TO FIGURES PUBLISHED IN THE JULY DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT GAZETTE. ALSO, THE NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS LOST DUE TO STRIKES IN THE FIRST

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SIX MONTHS WAS DOWN BY NEARLY 60 PERCENT FROM THE SAME

PERIOD LAST YEAR. ONE EXPLANATION FOR THIS MUCH-IMPROVED STRIKE RECORD COULD WELL BE THE ALMOST UNIVERSAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE FIRST STAGE OF THE GOVERNMENT-TUC PAY POLICY LIMITING INCREASES TO 16 A WEEK (REFTEL).

2. THE LATEST FIGURES SHOW THAT IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 1976 955 STRIKES WERE RECORDED BY THE DE COMPARED WITH 1,391 DURING THE SAME PERIOD IN 1975. THE LAST TIME A LOWER TOTAL WAS RECORDED WAS IN 1953 WHEN THERE WERE 849 STRIKES IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS. THE NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS LOST THROUGH STRIKES BETWEEN JANUARY AND JUNE THIS YEAR WAS 1,584,000, COMPARED WITH 3,861,000 IN THE SAME PERIOD IN 1975.

3. OF THE 26 INDUSTRY GROUPS COVERED BY THE LATEST STATISTICS, ONLY FOUR SHOWED AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF STOPPAGES RECORDED IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THIS YEAR COMPARED WITH LAST YEAR. ONLY THREE SHOWED AN INCREASE IN WORKING DAYS LOST.

4. COMMENT: THE TIMING OF THE RELEASE OF THE LATEST STATISTICS ON STRIKES WAS PROPITIOUS FOR THE GOVERNMENT, JUST AT THE TIME OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF TUC-LABOR PARTY AGREEMENT ON THE "NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT", ACRIMONIOUS DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURE CUTS, AND CRITICISM BY THE TRIBUNE GROUP AND SOME TRADE UNIONISTS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE IN DEALING WITH UNEMPLOYMENT.

ARMSTRONG

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